

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5062

As Passed Senate, March 17, 2003

Title: An act relating to the recreational salmon and marine fish enhancement program.

Brief Description: Creating the Puget Sound recreational fisheries enhancement oversight committee.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Parks, Fish & Wildlife (originally sponsored by Senators Doumit, Oke, Jacobsen, Winsley, Rasmussen and Kohl-Welles).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Parks, Fish & Wildlife: 2/17/03, 2/25/03 [DPS].

Passed Senate: 3/17/03, 45-4.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON PARKS, FISH & WILDLIFE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5062 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Oke, Chair; Sheahan, Vice Chair; Doumit, Esser, Jacobsen, Morton and Swecker.

Staff: Kari Guy (786-7437)

Background: The Puget Sound Recreational Fisheries Enhancement Program was created by the Legislature in 1993 to increase recreational fishing opportunities for salmon and bottomfish in Puget Sound. The Department of Fish and Wildlife is required to produce delayed-release chinook salmon, with a production goal of three million fish annually. The department is also required to research and develop programs for the artificial rearing and release of marine bottomfish species.

The program is funded with a portion of each saltwater and combination recreational fishing license fee. Funds are deposited in the recreational fisheries enhancement account, which is dedicated solely to the enhancement program.

In the 2002 supplemental budget, one of the hatcheries used to raise delayed-release chinook was closed. Concerns have been raised by recreational fishers that dedicated funds are not being used to support the enhancement program.

Summary of Bill: The Puget Sound Recreational Fisheries Enhancement Oversight Committee is created. The director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife must appoint at least seven members to the committee to ensure broad representation from sport fishing organizations.

The committee must advise the department on all aspects of the Puget Sound Recreational Fisheries Enhancement Program, including the annual budget and proposed annual production of salmon and other species.

Funds in the recreational fisheries enhancement account may not be used to backfill shortfalls in other state funding sources.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The Puget Sound Recreational Fisheries Enhancement Program is necessary for the future of sport fishing in Puget Sound. This bill will add a degree of confidence to license purchasers that funds will be spent as intended.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Frank Urabeck, Northwest Marine Trade Assn.; Clint Muns, Puget Sound Anglers; Ric Abbett, Trout Unlimited; Corey Freeman, NW Sport Fishing Industry Assn.; Paul Seidel, WDFW; Kevin Ryan, Coho Coalition South Sound Flyfishers.